

U.S. Department of State

Trafficking in Persons Report – Suriname

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SURINAME (Tier 2)

Suriname is principally a transit and destination country for women and children trafficked transnationally for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation; it is also a source country for underage Surinamese girls, and increasingly boys, trafficked internally for sexual exploitation. Foreign girls and women are trafficked from Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, and Colombia to Suriname for commercial sexual exploitation; some transit Suriname en route to Europe. Chinese nationals transiting Suriname risk debt bondage to migrant smugglers; men are exploited in forced labor and women in commercial sexual exploitation. Haitians migrating illegally through Suriname are also vulnerable to forced labor exploitation in the country.

The Government of Suriname does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government investigated and prosecuted some suspected traffickers, and worked on improving victim assistance. The government should intensify its efforts to identify, convict, and punish traffickers, including any public officials connected to such activity. It also should consider legislative revisions to better protect foreign trafficking victims, and provide greater victim services.

Prosecution

The Surinamese government demonstrated solid anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts over the last year. The Parliament of Suriname amended the country's Criminal Code in April 2006 to prohibit all forms of human trafficking, prescribing punishment of up to 20 years in prison. These punishments are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for other grave crimes. An interagency trafficking-in-persons working group leads government efforts to investigate and prosecute traffickers. The government convicted two brothel owners of trafficking women for commercial sexual exploitation, sentencing one to six months and another to 18 months in prison. Police arrested another individual for trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation; his trial is underway. An anti-trafficking police unit randomly checked brothels for mistreatment, and to ensure that women in these establishments were not subjected to conditions of involuntary servitude. The country also initiated discussions with governments in neighboring Guyana, French Guyana, and Brazil on modalities for repatriating trafficking victims. There were reports that Surinamese immigration and customs officials facilitated some trafficking into the country; authorities indicate that they are investigating these allegations.

Protection

The government sustained modest but inadequate efforts to protect victims of trafficking. Due to a lack of resources, the government works closely with civil society to shelter and assist victims. Surinamese authorities encourage victims to assist in the investigation and prosecution of their traffickers. There were some reports of foreign victims being detained or deported by Surinamese authorities for immigration violations. Suriname does not provide legal alternatives to the removal of foreign victims to countries where they face hardship or retribution. However, the government's trafficking-in-persons working group is drafting legislation to provide trafficking victims with temporary residency status. It is also working with civil society on solutions for providing better victim assistance.

Prevention

High-level officials continued to condemn and draw attention to the problem of human trafficking in Suriname during the reporting period. The government's trafficking-in-persons working group initiated press events and education campaigns throughout 2006. Anti-trafficking posters and brochures were distributed. In early 2007, the working group launched a new awareness-raising campaign, and hosted informational meetings in the nation's border area with Guyana, where many victims are trafficked into the country. Suriname has not ratified the 2000 UN TIP Protocol.